



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1976

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DROP IN PUBLIC ASSISTANCE APPLICATIONS  
INDICATION OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY  
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THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE APPLYING FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE IN JANUARY 1976 WAS 1,569, WHICH COMPARES MOST FAVOURABLY WITH THE 3,313 WHO APPLIED IN THE SAME MONTH LAST YEAR.

COMMENTING ON THIS DROP, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR. FREDERICK CLARK, SAID IT GAVE AN INDICATION THAT THE ECONOMY WAS PICKING UP AGAIN.

HE RECALLED THAT THE RECESSION IN 1974 RESULTED IN MONTHLY APPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RISING TO HIGHER LEVELS THAN WOULD NORMALLY BE EXPECTED. THIS WAS DUE TO THE FAMILIES OF UNEMPLOYED BREADWINNERS AND THOSE FAMILIES WITH EARNINGS BELOW PUBLIC ASSISTANCE LEVELS LOOKING TO THE SCHEME FOR HELP, MR. CLARK SAID. +IN EFFECT, PUBLIC ASSISTANCE WAS PROVIDING SOME SUPPORT TO MEET UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDER-EMPLOYMENT ALTHOUGH ITS MAIN PURPOSE IS TO GIVE A GUARANTEED INCOME TO PEOPLE WHO THROUGH AGE, ILLNESS, DISABILITY, OR THE NEED TO LOOK AFTER DEPENDENTS CANNOT UNDERTAKE WORK.+

HOWEVER, THE NUMBER OF CASES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE IN JANUARY THIS YEAR SHOWED AN ACTUAL DROP FROM THE PREVIOUS MONTH FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME CAME INTO OPERATION. FROM 55,620 CASES IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR IT DROPPED TO 55,464 IN JANUARY — A DECREASE OF 156 CASES.

MR. CLARK WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE NUMBERS OF THE UNEMPLOYED WHO WERE LEAVING THE CASE-LOAD. IN JANUARY, OVER 2,000 PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CASES WERE CLOSED AND THERE WAS LITTLE DOUBT THAT A LARGE PROPORTION OF THESE WERE AS A RESULT OF PEOPLE FINDING WORK OR RECEIVING INCREASED EARNINGS.

IN JANUARY 1975, 361 UNEMPLOYED BREADWINNERS (10.8 PER CENT OF THE APPLICATIONS RECEIVED IN THAT MONTH) TURNED TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES, WHEREAS IN JANUARY THIS YEAR THE CORRESPONDING FIGURE WAS ONLY 73 (4.65 PER CENT OF THE APPLICATIONS).

+THE LOSS OF UNEMPLOYED AND LOW-EARNING CASES FROM THE CASELOAD IS A HEALTHY SIGN,+ MR. CLARK SAID, +IN THAT IT NOT ONLY MEANS THAT THOSE WHO ARE ANXIOUS TO WORK ARE FINDING EMPLOYMENT BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT ENABLES THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME TO CONCENTRATE ON LOOKING AFTER THE KIND OF PEOPLE IT HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO HELP. THAT IS THOSE WHO ARE IN THE MAIN ELDERLY AND SICK, OR WIDOWS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN.+

HE ADDED THAT SINCE THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME WAS EXPANDED IN 1972, THE CASELOAD HAD STEADILY INCREASED ASIDE FROM THE SURGE DURING THE RECESSION AND HE EXPECTED IT TO CONTINUE TO DO SO, PERHAPS MORE MODERATELY, UNTIL A POINT WAS REACHED WHERE ALL WHO WERE POTENTIALLY WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE SCHEME HAD APPLIED FOR AND WERE DRAWING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.

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SPEEDPOST CHARGES TO BE REDUCED

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THE POST OFFICE'S SPEEDPOST SERVICE WILL BE SUBSTANTIALLY CHEAPER FROM NEXT MONTH.

THE COST OF MAILING THE FIRST POUND TO DESTINATIONS IN BRITAIN, U.S.A. AND BELGIUM WILL BE LOWERED BY \$20 WHILE THAT TO BRAZIL WILL BE REDUCED BY \$30 AND TO JAPAN BY \$10.

IN GENERAL, THE REDUCTION WILL BE ABOUT 20 PER CENT FOR ALL THE FIVE COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE SPEEDPOST LINKS WITH HONG KONG.

A POST OFFICE SPOKESMAN ATTRIBUTED THIS TO THE GROWING POPULARITY OF THE SPECIAL POSTAL SERVICE.

+WITH MORE PEOPLE AND FIRMS ADOPTING SPEEDPOST, THE POST OFFICE IS NOW IN A BETTER POSITION TO REVISE COSTS AND TARIFFS,+ HE SAID.

EXISTING AND REVISED CHARGES FOR SPEEDPOST SERVICES ARE AS FOLLOWS :-

COUNTRY	PRESENT CONTRACT RATES *		NEW RATES AS FROM MAR. 1, 76 *	
	FIRST LB.	EACH ADDNL. LB.	FIRST LB.	EACH ADDNL. LB.
GREAT BRITAIN )				
U.S.A. )	\$100	\$15	\$80	\$15
BELGIUM )				
JAPAN	\$90	\$5	\$80	\$5
BRAZIL	\$130	\$35	\$100	\$25

\* FOR +ON DEMAND+ SERVICES TO GREAT BRITAIN AND U.S.A. A \$20 +ON DEMAND+ FEE IS PAYABLE IN ADDITION TO THE BASIC CHARGES.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON SPEEDPOST CONTRACT OR +ON DEMAND+ SERVICES CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE POST OFFICE REPRESENTATIVE ON 5-245992.

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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION RETIRES  
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MR. WILLIAM FISHER-SHORT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (FURTHER), IS GOING ON PRE-RETIREMENT LEAVE NEXT WEEK AFTER 17 YEARS' SERVICE IN HONG KONG AND FOUR IN THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA.

HE WILL BE PRESENTED WITH A GIFT FROM HIS FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES ON THURSDAY (FEBRUARY 26).

THE PRESENTATION WILL BE MADE BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR. KENNETH TOPLEY.

MR. FISHER-SHORT BEGAN HIS SERVICE IN HONG KONG AS AN EDUCATION OFFICER AND HIS DUTIES COVERED A WIDE FIELD, FIRST AS A TEACHER IN KING'S COLLEGE, AND THEN AS A LECTURER AT THE NORTHCOTE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION. HE WAS AWARDED A DIPLOMA IN EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE (WITH DISTINCTION) BY MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY IN JULY 1962.

MR. FISHER-SHORT WAS PROMOTED TO SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER IN SEPTEMBER 1965 AND TO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION (CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS) IN JULY 1971.

HE TOOK CHARGE OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION DIVISION IN JANUARY 1973. HE HAS ALSO SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL WORK TRAINING AND AS A MEMBER OF THE METRICATION COMMITTEE.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT 11.30 A.M. ON THURSDAY AT THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM, LEE GARDENS, THIRD FLOOR, HYSAN AVENUE.

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CO-OPERATION BETWEEN GOV'T AND PEOPLE BEARS FRUIT

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CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN CHEUNG CHAU HAS RESULTED IN THE ISLAND HAVING A VERY COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF FACILITIES, THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, MR. F.K. LI, SAID TODAY (TUESDAY).

MR. LI WAS SPEAKING AT THE OPENING OF THE CHEUNG CHAU COMMUNITY CENTRE.

HE NOTED THAT SUCH FACILITIES INCLUDED A POLICE STATION, A HOSPITAL, EIGHT PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

MR. LI SAID : +THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE PROVISION OF THESE FACILITIES IS, OF COURSE, INDISPENSABLE, BUT EFFORTS FROM THIS QUARTER ALONE COULD NOT HAVE PRODUCED THE CHEUNG CHAU WE KNOW TODAY WITHOUT THE UNFAILING SUPPORT OF THE LOCAL RESIDENTS.+

THE NEW CENTRE, LOCATED AT TUNG WAN ON A SITE OF 18,000 SQUARE FEET, IS A TWO-STOREY BUILDING WITH A MULTI-PURPOSE ASSEMBLY HALL ON THE GROUND FLOOR AND A NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL ROOMS ON THE UPPER FLOOR.

THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDED THE LAND AND THE LOTTERIES FUND CONTRIBUTED \$250,000 TOWARDS THE CAPITAL COST. THE BALANCE OF \$180,000 WAS MET BY DONATIONS FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

THE CENTRE'S OPERATING COSTS WILL BE MET BY THE RURAL COMMITTEE WHICH WILL MANAGE THE CENTRE THROUGH ITS YOUTH ORGANISERS.

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WATER CUT

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WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN SHAM SHUI PO WILL BE INTERRUPTED FROM 1 A.M. TO 6 A.M. ON THURSDAY (FEBRUARY 26) WHEN THE WATERWORKS OFFICE WILL CARRY OUT LEAKAGE TESTS.

THE PREMISES TO BE AFFECTED ARE BOUNDED BY NAM CHEONG STREET, WOR CHAI STREET, PAK TIN STREET, TAI PO ROAD AND SHEK KIP MEI STREET.

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PRESS CONFERENCE ON MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY  
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NOTE TO EDITORS:

A PRESS CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN THE G.I.S. THEATRE AT 3 P.M. ON FRIDAY (FEBRUARY 27) ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MASS TRANSIT RAILWAY IN CENTRAL.

OFFICERS FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, AND THE ROYAL HONG KONG POLICE, WILL BE ON HAND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND.

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